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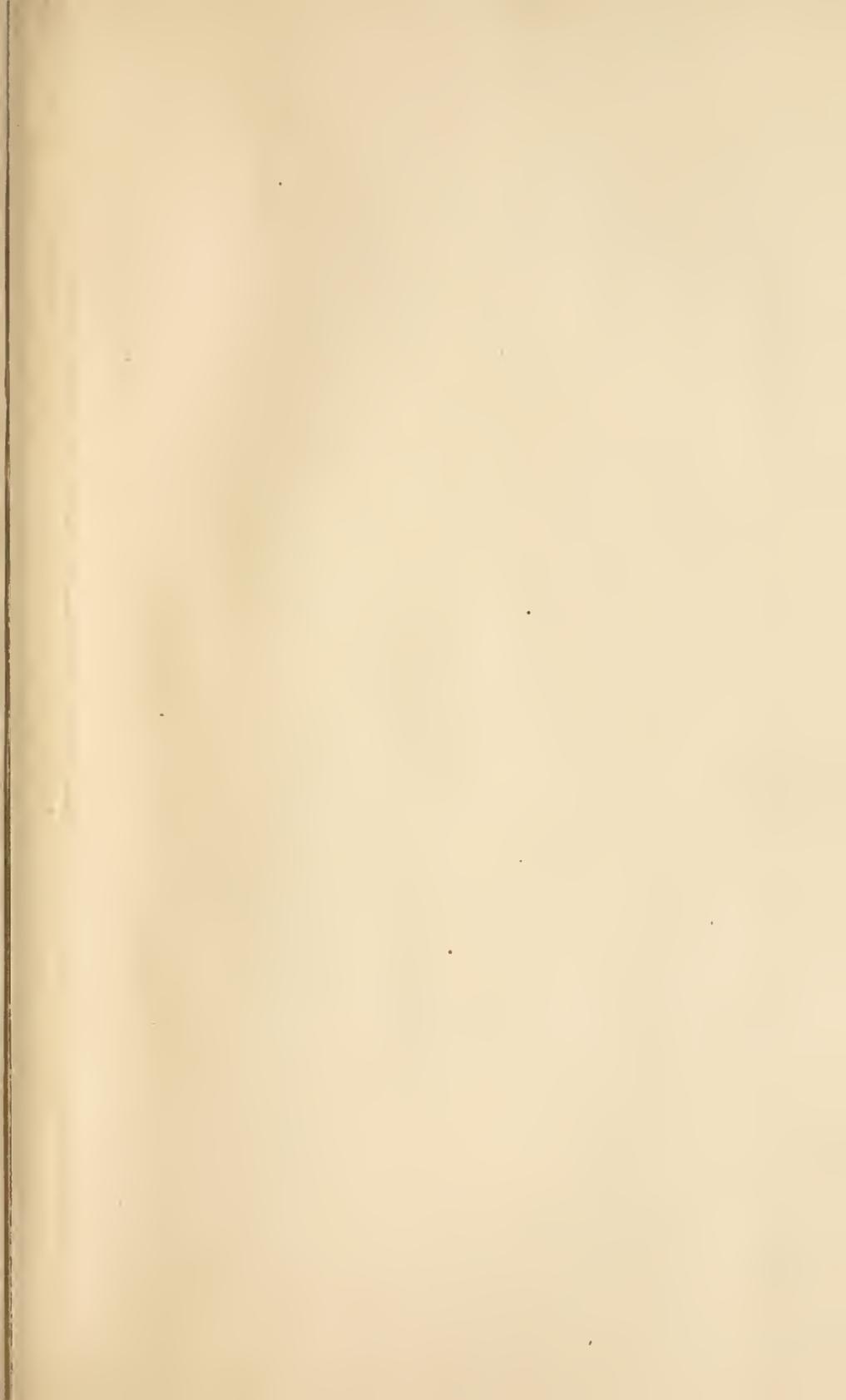
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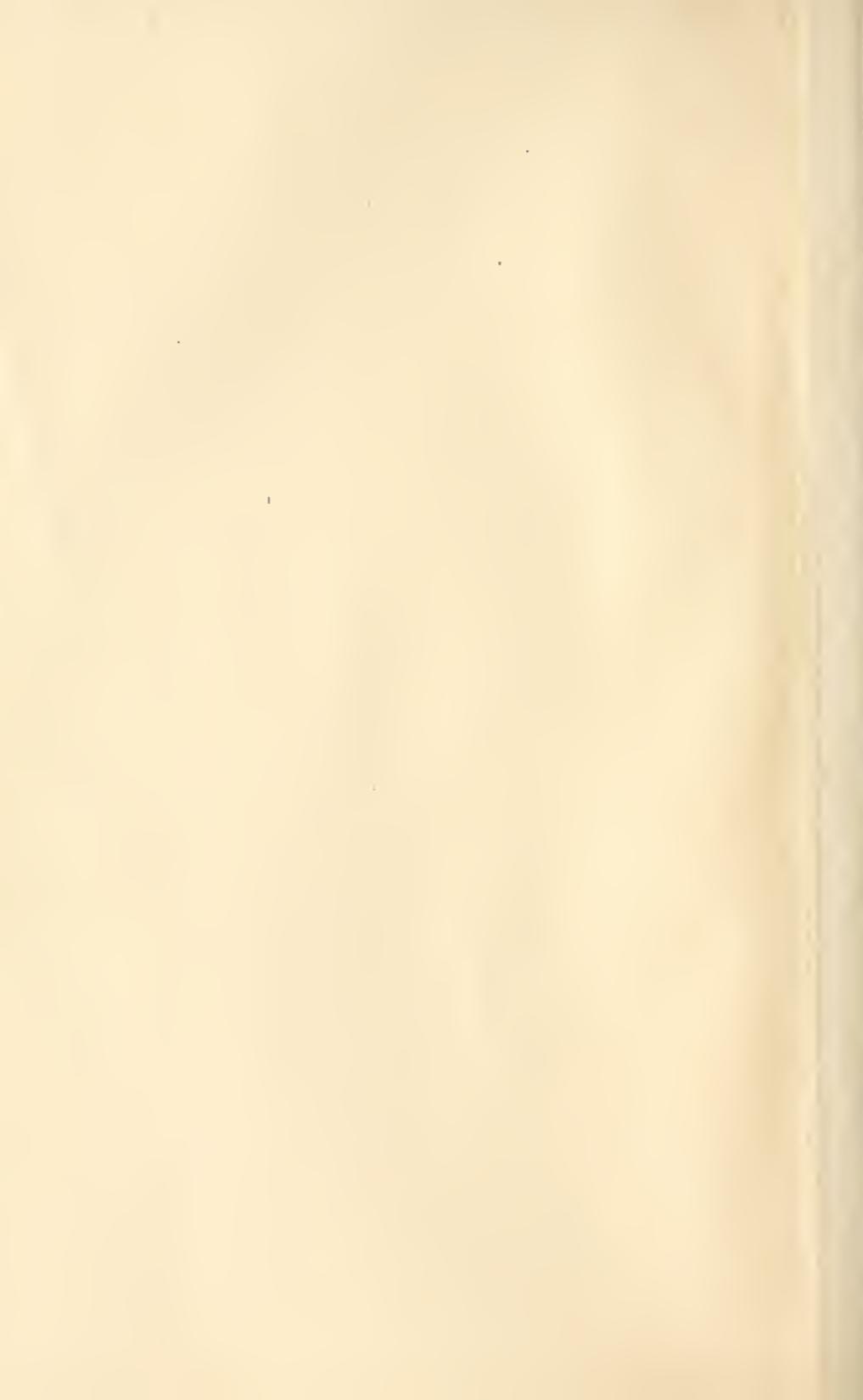




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Book C 87





OHIO POLITICS.

COX AFTER GIDDINGS.

“FATHER GIDDINGS” DODGES UNDER THE BUSH WITH HIS COLORED FRIEND.

“CRISP WITH NUMIDIAN CURL.”--*Bulwer.*

Exchange
West. Eng. Hist. Soc.

The House, on the 15th of January, 1859, being in Committee of the Whole on the codification of the Revenue laws, (House bill, No. 487,) introduced by Mr. JOHN COCHRANE, of New York.

Mr. GIDDINGS moved to amend the bill as follows:

After the word “same” in the eighth line, section fifty-seven, page 52, insert the following:

And the eighth, ninth and tenth sections of the act, entitled, “An act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States, from and after the 1st day of January, 1808.”

By this amendment, the restrictions of the act of 1807 against the foreign slave-trade and against its abuse under the guise of the coast-wise or inter-State slave-trade, are repealed. These sections regulate but *restrict* the coast-wise slave-trade, and were intended to prevent the foreign slave-trade from using a domestic guise; and this is the proposition which Mr. GIDDINGS’ amendment proposes to repeal. After some general remarks, the following discussion ensued, as reported in the Congressional Globe:

Mr. GIDDINGS. I have another thing in view. I know I am unpopular in my views. Everything is unpopular upon this floor which has not reference to political matters. I want to make this a political question. I say to the gentlemen upon the other side that I desire to make an issue with the Democratic party of Ohio upon sustaining this very slave-trade. Will they go with me upon that? I think they will. It will do us good, and them no hurt. Their story is told anywhere. I desire throughout the whole North to see this made an issue. Even in Pennsylvania, the State of my own nativity, I would see the question made directly to the people there, to see who will sustain this commerce in human flesh, and who are opposed to it. I am in earnest upon this subject. I do not know as you believe it, Mr. Chairman, *but I believe it is a fact that my name has been suggested as a candidate for the Governorship of Ohio*; and if I should be nominated, of which I do not think there is any real prospect, I want to make this issue directly with my opponent, and with the whole Democratic party; *and I want to see my friend there from the metropolitan district of Ohio (Mr. Cox) driven from under the bush.* I want to see him compelled to stand out and say whether he is in favor of continuing the slave-trade, or whether he is against it. I believe he would be against it. Would he not?

Mr. COX. If the gentleman will allow me, I will say I do not understand that the Democratic party, North or South, are committed in favor of the slave-trade; and the gentleman knows it well.

Mr. GIDDINGS. Well, I am glad he has announced it, and I want to hold him up to his constituents as denouncing the slave-trade, and he will be buried so far out of sight that the hand of political resurrection will never reach him. He is an excellent gentleman, and if he repents we will receive him into the Republican ranks; though, like Paul, he has been persecuting the saints. [Laughter.]

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As I was remarking, I desire that this question shall go home to the people. *I desire to see my colleagues of the Democratic party upon this floor vote for my amendment, and not against it.* God knows that I do not rejoice in the death of any sinner. [Laughter.] I would rather that they should repent and come with us. I want them to come out, however, and stand boldly upon their true position, whatever it is. I am in sober earnest. I ask gentlemen from the South, I ask gentlemen who are actuated by honest motives, and who stand boldly for what they believe to be right, to bring these men out. Will you do it? Let us put them upon the record. Let us have a vote upon this amendment. Let it go into the House, where the yeas and nays may be called on it. Let gentlemen take their position as they please. This is a legitimate party question. I hope gentlemen will meet it manfully.

Mr. COX.—Mr. Chairman, as my friend from Ohio has seen proper to refer to me in the course of his remarks in reference to his amendment, allow me to pay my respects to him for a few moments. The other day, when the gentleman spoke in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, he gave expression to ideas to which I believe the people of his State and mine will not yield their assent. That speech, which was not unlike his speech of to-day, was rather for the purpose of a warning and a threat to his own Republican friends, than as a challenge to the Democratic party.

The CHAIRMAN. The time for general debate has expired.

Mr. COX. I hope I may be permitted to proceed.

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. I will yield to the gentleman from Ohio to go on with his remarks, if there be no objection, and it is not taken out of my time.

Mr. WASHBURN, of Illinois. I wish to make a remark. The general debate is closed. This is a long bill; and I tell the gentleman from New York, that if he does not insist upon the strictest enforcement of the rule that members shall be confined in their remarks to the pending amendment, he will never get through ten pages of his bill.

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. It is my intention to do so when the committee gets to that stage of the bill.

Mr. COX. I hope the rule will not now be enforced upon me. I will move an amendment, or ask unanimous consent to go on with my reply.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection?

Mr. MORGAN. Does the gentleman from New York waive his right to close the debate in a speech of one hour?

The CHAIRMAN. He does not.

Mr. MORGAN. Then I insist upon the enforcement of the rule.

Mr. KELLOGG. I hope the gentleman will withdraw his objection. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Cox) ought to have leave to reply to his colleague.

Mr. MORGAN. I must insist upon my objection.

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. I am willing to yield to the gentleman from Ohio, provided it is not taken out of my time.

Mr. MORGAN. As there seems to be a general desire that I shall withdraw my objection, I do so. After the conclusion of the gentleman's remarks I will insist upon it.

Mr. COX. Mr. Chairman, I prefer to reply to the remarks of my venerable friend now, because I do not want them to go unanswered to the people of Ohio. He has endeavored to place his colleagues here in the position of sustaining the slave-trade; when he knows, as well as any man in this House, that the Democratic party, North and South, have, by their solemn action in the last Congress, voted that it was inexpedient and unjust to reopen the slave-trade; and when he knows that the great body of the people, North and South, is opposed to that trade. And, sir, when he tenders that issue to the Democratic party in Ohio, or elsewhere, he tenders an issue that cannot be made up before the country. The gentleman knows full well the legislation on the subject; and, so far as I know, we have laws stringent enough at present against the slave-trade; for they make it piracy.

Mr. GIDDINGS. I have referred to the coast-wise trade.

Mr. COX. The gentleman undertook to place the Democratic party in a false position. He undertook to convey the idea in his speech that the party to which I belong was a pro-slavery party, when he knows, sir, better than any other man,

that that party is neither a pro-slavery party nor an anti-slavery party; that it has always planted itself upon the doctrine that Congress should not interfere in relation to that subject, either to establish or to prohibit it; and that by no congressional contrivance should it compel territorial or State Legislatures, in any way to establish, prohibit, regulate, or interfere with the institution of slavery. It leaves that subject to the people to deal with as they may think proper; to deal with it by the popular ballot, by the voice of the majority, which is the largest reach of popular and personal liberty.

I know the theory of the gentleman. It is based on an equality which he finds in the Declaration of Independence. He misinterprets that declaration as he misinterprets the Democratic policy; for I say that the highest refinement of personal liberty is that which is called popular liberty. It includes all other liberties. The right to cast a ballot in respect to local affairs is the sacred emblem and instrument of true republicanism. That little quiet right, which every man exercises when he drops his ballot, as the snow flake, may seem nothing in and of itself, but it becomes, by combination, the voice of a great people. It becomes an avalanche of power, which makes our constitutions, which protects property, conscience, reputation, life, and personal liberty. Popular liberty is the doctrine of the Democratic party; and the gentleman cannot lay down any doctrine which would subordinate the rights of popular liberty to his philanthropic ideas in regard to personal liberty.

Mr. Chairman, allow me simply to add these remarks before I sit down: the gentleman has seen proper to say that he was spoken of as a candidate for the governorship of our State. I am sure I mean no disrespect to him when I say, that I hope he may be nominated, and that his friends will have the courage to stand on his doctrines as he enunciated them. I know that during the last canvass in Ohio, a large segment of the Republican party, in my part of the State, held with the distinguished ex-Governor Corwin, to the idea, that the Philadelphia platform did allow the admission of slave States. Yes; and they quoted the vote of the honorable gentleman himself on the Crittenden-Montgomery bill to sanction the doctrine. (Laughter.) Now, my friend, who is a sort of Jove on the Republican Olympus, hurled two epistolary thunderbolts against Governor Corwin, but never got a response from him. Let the gentleman come to Central Ohio, and we will give him a hearing and a warm welcome. Let him come there with his theories on personal liberty, and we will give him time to ponder on the philosophy of old Aristides, who said that he yielded to the popular will in every regard, even when it drove him into exile. (Laughter.)

But, Mr. Chairman, I will not detain the House further. The gentleman planted himself, in his speech the other day, on the idea of negro equality with the white man. True, he did not come up to it exactly in his printed speech, but he did so on the floor. I notice, that in his printed speech he has interpolated the idea that he was not willing quite that the African should vote in our elections. Now, let him come up manfully and carry out his own ideas of equality. We will meet him on that, as we will meet him at all times in regard to all his ideas.

Mr. GIDDINGS. The gentleman has totally misunderstood me.

Mr. COX. Is the gentleman in favor of allowing the negroes of Ohio to vote?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I have expressed no opinion on that subject. (Laughter.) But if the negro have equal intelligence and morality and virtue, I would give him all the rights that I would give to my friend. I judge men by their virtue and intelligence, and not by their complexion.

Mr. COX. Is my colleague willing to give to Africans in our State the right to vote?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I am willing to give that right to all men of equal knowledge, morality, and virtue.

Mr. COX. Will the gentleman come out and answer my question categorically?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I will. I say that so far as the negroes equal the members of the Democratic party, in knowledge, morality, and virtue, I will give them leave to vote.

Mr. COX. I have heard the gentleman state this insult before in one of his letters; but why does he not come up to his general position and say whether he is or is not in favor of African equality and negro suffrage in Ohio?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I repeat what I have just stated; I put the negroes and the Democrats on the same footing.

Mr. COX. Answer the question, sir. The gentleman talked about my hiding under the bush. Let him come out if he dare from his covert! (Laughter.)

Mr. GIDDINGS. I say that I do not interfere in this question as to superiority between the Democrats and the negroes.

Mr. COX. *He* talk of his Democratic colleagues skulking under the bush! He himself now shirks. He *dare* not answer my question. I will not press the gentleman further. My respect for him will not allow me to put him to the torture further. He never could get the nomination for the governorship if he had answered my question categorically; and I am anxious he should be nominated. (Laughter.)

Mr. GIDDINGS. So far as the Democratic party is concerned, I repeat that I judge the Africans by their intelligence and virtue. I do not enter into the quarrel between them with the Republicans. I do not mean to put them on an equality with the Republicans.

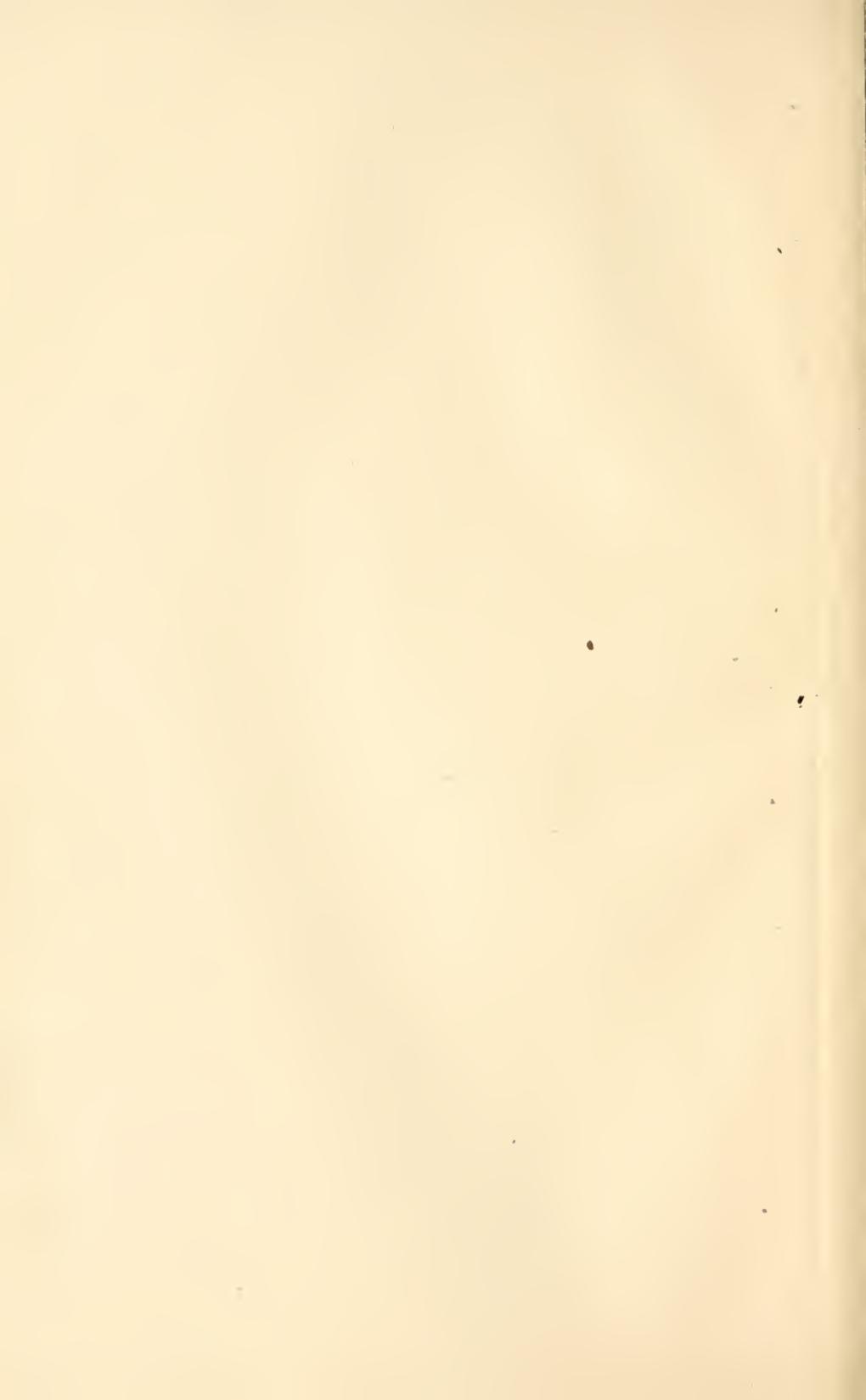
Mr. COX. The gentleman does not answer my question. I therefore will not press him further.

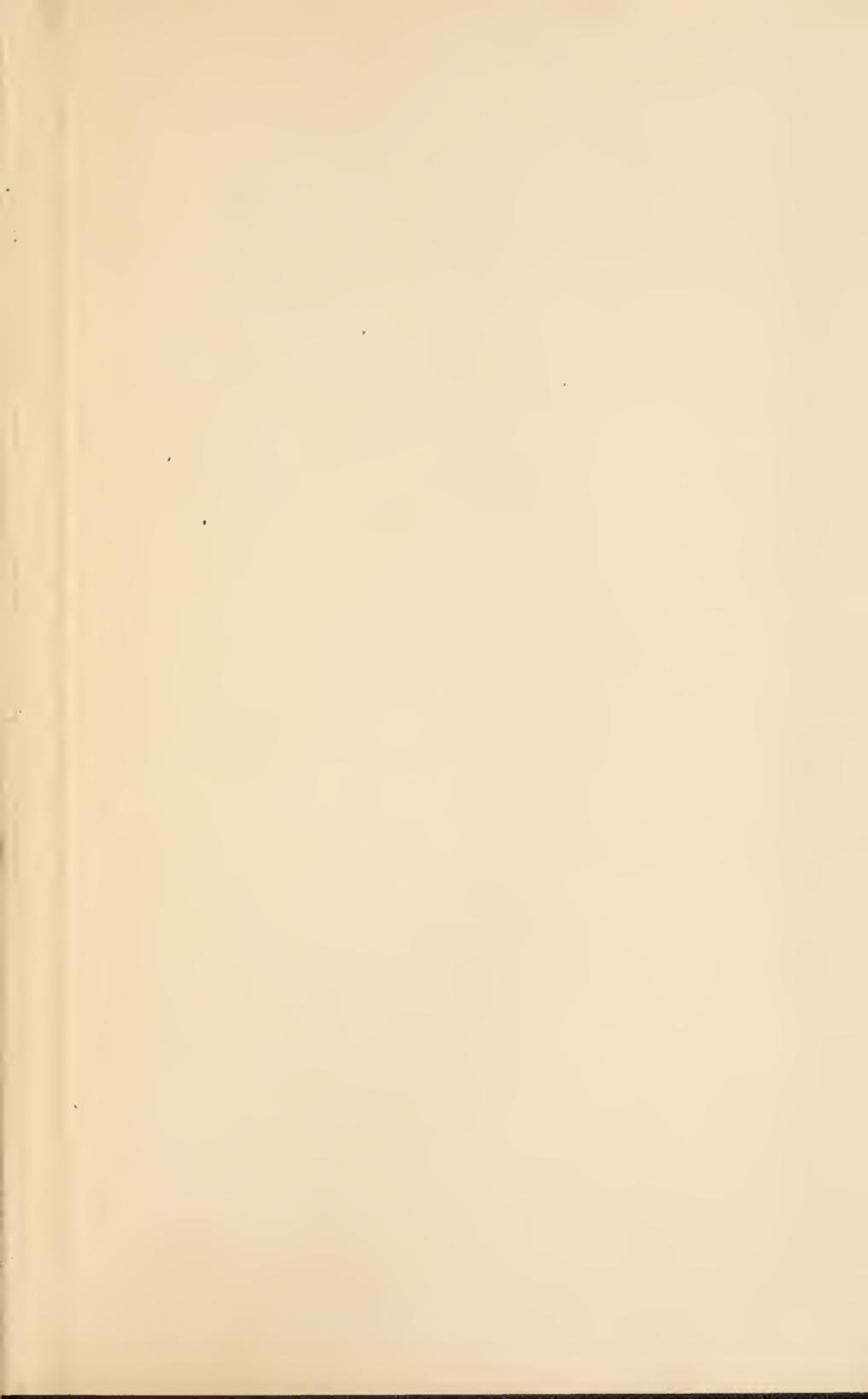
All that I wished was to put the Democratic party right in regard to this matter of slavery; and they are right on it. The gentleman may go on and get the nomination for the governorship, and make his alliance, if he can, in northern and southern Ohio, and we will meet him at Philippi.

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